

Fen Ditton Primary School

Annual Report – 2016/17

The Governing Body wishes to report on a number of aspects of its work.

Overview

It has been a busy year at Fen Ditton Primary School with a number of significant staffing changes, notably :-

- Mark Askew starting in April 2016, and so still bedding in and finding his feet in his first full Academic year
- Charlotte James being appointed as Deputy Head and taking on the role of SENDCO
- The knock on effect of these changes with new teachers starting – Lis Hackett and Sally Prosser, and Ruth Bertone moving to share the class teaching role with Charlotte.

Ofsted visited the school just before the Christmas break

And alongside this, serious consideration and discussions (and plenty of meetings!) have taken place over the approach by Anglian Learning for Fen Ditton Primary School to become an Academy and form a Primary Multi-Academy Trust as part of Anglian Learning

The on-going support for the school had continued, and we believe that we have been reasonably successful in serving in our role as ‘Critical Friends’ of the school – supporting, challenging, visiting, reviewing...

Finances

School finances are always a little challenging as, rather annoyingly, the school financial year doesn't match the academic year. The financial year we are reporting on here runs from April 2016 to March 2017 (1 term of the 2015/16 and 2 terms of the 2016/17 academic year s)

The School started the year with relatively healthy reserves, a good position in the current economic and educational climate, and is the direct result of careful management of the school finances over many years. Although on paper it might look comfortable, there are always vulnerabilities, especially around different funding sources that can stop suddenly.

The Governing Body believe it is prudent to maintain healthy reserves. However, these reserves did creep up in the year – mainly as a result of planned capital and maintenance/upgrade work to the buildings and site not happening in the financial year. There are only certain times within the year where the work can be done on things like the toilets, etc – and much of the work that happened during the summer holidays 2017 had been scheduled and budgeted for in the preceding financial year but will now come out of the 2017/18 school budget.

So the school ended the financial year in March 2017 with increased reserves – but significant sums committed to capital expenditure projects. And, with the change in staffing structure, while we believe this is really positive for the staff and pupils, we are operating a model which is not financially sustainable in the long term based on current projections and the forecast indicates that the reserves will be spent within a couple of years.

Governor Meetings

We hold a Full Governors Meeting once every half term – 6 a year. Alongside this, there are two committees – Resources (overseeing matters such as Finance, Buildings, Health & Safety, Travel) and Standards (focusing on curriculum, data and behaviour). Again these committees meet every half term and take some of the pressure off the Full Governors meetings.

Many Governors also carry other responsibilities – there is a committee that considers Teachers Pay and conducts the Heads Performance Management; we have a Governor responsible for supporting the school with its Safeguarding, and a number of other roles divided up across the team.

It is always difficult when experienced Governors move on, and over the past year we have had a couple leave us in Fiona Jackson and John Williams. We currently therefore have a few spaces, but have held off recruiting until there is a bit of clarity over the decision regarding academy conversion.

We are very aware of the need to make sure our meetings are run efficiently and this is a focus for us as we move ahead – ensuring everything that needs to happen does in a timely fashion, but there is also time to be strategic and objective.